

Message Text

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51 64

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 NEA-06 MC-02 OMB-01

SSO-00 INRE-00 IO-03 AID-10 DRC-01 L-02 /074 W

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O 140030Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4322

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 4627

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - SECTION INFO AND TEXT

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT MOLINA ABOUT HONDURAS/
EL SALVADOR PROBLEMS AND OTHER MATTERS

SUMMARY: MOLINA HOPED HONDURAS CAN BE PREVAILED UPON, WITH
OUR HELP, TO EXTEND NEGOTIATIONS PAST SALVADORAN ELECTIONS
NEXT MARCH. PRESIDENTS MAY MEET EARLY NEXT WEEK TO SEEK
SUBSTANTIVE AS WELL AS PROCEDURAL SOLUTIONS. HE RECIPROCATED
OUR EXPRESSION OF FRIENDSHIP AND GOODWILL AND RATIONALIZED
HIS PURCHASE OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT FROM ISRAEL WHILE REGISTERING
MILD CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL US SALES TO HONDURAS.
BE BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM ASPIRATIONS
OF HIS CENTRIST, NATIONALIST AND CAPITALIST REGIME. WE
EXPRESSED OUR INTEREST IN BEING HELPFUL TO MAINTAIN THE
BEST POSSIBLE ATMOSPHERE CONDUCIVE TO THE TWO DISPUTANT'S
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SETTLING THEIR PROBLEMS BY THEMSELVES.

2. THIS MORNING (DEC 13) LAZAR AND I CALLED ON PRESIDENT MOLINA WHO HAD WITH HIM FONMIN BORGONOVO AND DR ORTIZ MANCIA. LAZAR OPENED CONVERSATION WITH REITERATION OF EXPRESSION OF UNALTERED AND CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP AND GOODWILL OF USG TOWARD GOES AND SALVADORAN PEOPLE.

3. PRES. MOLINA IMMEDIATELY BROACHED HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR PROBLEM AS FOLLOWS:

(A) BOTH HE AND HOPEZ ARELLANO WERE SINCERELY SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. HE CONSIDERED LOPEZ TO BE SENSIBLE AND WELL-INTENTIONED AND HE RECOGNIZED THAT LOPEZ HAD CERTAIN DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING MILITARY FACTIONALISM, WHICH ENCUMBERED HIS ABILITY TO REACH COMPROMISE ON THE BORDER QUESTION. GOES WAS CONCERNED THAT INTERNAL HONDURAN PRESSURES MIGHT FORCE GOH INTO BREAKING OFF NEGOTIATIONS ON DECEMBER 15. GOES DESIRED TO KEEP THE DORR OPEN BEYOND THAT DATE OUT OF CONCERN THAT A RUPTURE WOULD GRAVELY DETERIORATE SITUATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND CONSTITUTE A SEVERE SET-BACK TO POSSIBILITY OF SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. THEY WERE BOTHERED BY SIGNS SUCH AS THE RECENT HONDURAN COMPLAINT TO OAS COMMITTEE ABOUT ALLEGED BORDER INCIDENTS BUT AGAIN TENDED TO ATTRIBUTE THIS TO LOPEZ' INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

(B) THE NEGOTIATIONS IN MEXICO WERE AT A STANDSTILL AT THE MOMENT SINCE THE HONDURANS WERE INSISTING ON RESUMPTION OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE SPECIFICS OF A BORDER SETTLEMENT; AND THE SALVADORANS WERE INSISTING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AGENDA FOR THE FINAL WEEK OF TALKS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRESCRIBED PROCEDURES. NEITHER SIDE HAD RAISED THE SUBJECT OF A POSSIBLE FINAL DECLARATION TO SUM UP THE NEGOTIATIONS AND PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THEIR CONTINUATION IN THE FUTURE. IN ORDER TO GET THE TWO SIDES TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION ON FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS, THE MEXICAN FOREIGN OFFICE HAD SCHEDULED A LUNCHEON TODAY TO ENABLE THE NEGOTIATORS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES.

(C) GENERALS SOMOZA AND ARANA HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO ARRANGE A MEETING FOR THEMSELVES WITH MOLINA AND LOPEZ ARELLANO PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF ARANA'S POST-OPERATIVE CONDITION. HOWEVER
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GEN. SOMOZA WOULD BE PASSING THROUGH SAN SALVADOR AT NOON TODAY ON HIS WAY TO MEXICO AND MOLINA WOULD EXPLORE WITH HIM THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLY MEETING OF CHIEFS OF STATE TO FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM AS SOON AS ARANA'S CONDITION PERMITTED. HE THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLY EARLY NEXT WEEK.

(D) THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED WAS THAT OF PREVENTING THE NEGOTIATIONS FROM TERMINATING DEFINITELY

DEC 15. THE GOES PREFERRED TO HAVE THE NEGOTIATIONS SUSPENDED AND RESUMED AFTER THE EASTER HOLIDAY BECAUSE IT FELT THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WOULD NOT BE CONDUCIVE TO POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE EARLY MONTHS MF 1974 WHEN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WOULD BE TAKING PLACE IN EL SALVADOR. IF SUSPENSION WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE HONDURANS, THE GOES WAS AMENABLE TO SOM SORT OF AN ARRANGEMENT TO COMMIT BOTH SIDES TO EXTEND THE TALKS BEYOND DEC 15 AND KEEP THEM GOING PAST THE MARCH 1974 ELECTION. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD PREVAIL ON THE HONDURANS TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS BEYOND DEC 15 THROUGH EITHER A SUSPENSION OR CONTINUATION TO ENABLE BOTH SIDES TO CONCLUDE THEM AFTER EASTER 1974.

4. PRES. MOLINA ALSO RAISED THE SUBJECT OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT ACQUISITION AND AGAIN EXPLAINED HIS MOTIVES FOR PROCUREMENT FROM ISRAEL IN THE SAME TERMS THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY REVEALED TO ME ON NOVEMBER 29. HE AGAIN CITED HIS MEETING WITH THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN LEADERS IN CHIQUIMULA IN WHICH HE HAD EXPLAINED TO THEM WHY HE WAS PROCURING FROM ISRAEL AND HAD GIVEN THEM ASSURANCES THAT NO THREAT WAS CNTENDED TO ANY OF HIS NEIGHBORS. HE ALLEGED THAT THEY ALL AGREED THAT EACH GOVERNMENT MUST DECIDE FOR ITSELF WHAT IT NEEDED TO MEET ITS SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES. HE MENTIONED THAT LOPEZ, PARTICULARLY, HAD UNDERSTOOD THIS AND HAD EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION TO ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL A-37'S FROM THE US. HE EXPRESSED HIS AWARENESS OF US INTEREST CN A BALANCED AND COORDINATED COMBAT AIRCRAFT ACQUISITION PROGRAM PS CENTRAL AMERICAN AND REGRETTED THAT OUR INABILITY TO ACCOMMODATE SALVADOR'S NEEDS CAUSED HIM TO GO TO ISRAEL FOR AIRPLANES. HE EVINCE SOME CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL US COMBAT AIRCRAFT SALES TO HONDURAS.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 NEA-06 MC-02 OMB-01

SSO-00 INRE-00 IO-03 AID-10 L-02 DRC-01 /074 W

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O 140030Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4323

INFO UUESGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 3524

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 4627

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

5. PRES. MOLINA BROADLY SKETCHED HIS CONCEPTS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF EL SALVADOR. HE CITED THE NUMEROUS SERIOUS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS PLAGUING THE COUNTRY AND STATED HIS DETERMINATION TO MOVE AHEAD IN EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS IN A MULTI YEAR REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERTAKE THIS TASK OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE OF CONDITIONS TO PREVENT A MAJOR POLITICAL ERUPTION. HE CHARACTERIZED HIS REGIME AS CENTRIST IN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, NATIONALIST IN A POSITIVE SENSE (I.E. DOMESTIC RATHER THAN FOREIGN SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS) AND PROGRESSIVELY CAPITALIST IN ECONOMIC ORIENTATION. HE HAD PRAISE FOR THE YOUNGER LEADERS OF THE BUSINESS WORLD WHOME HE CONSIDERED TO HAVE HTE OUTLOOK TO MOVE THE NATION TOWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE.

6. PRES. MOLINA RECIPROCATED OUR ASSURANCES OF GOODWILL
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AND FRIENDSHIP AND STATED HIS PERSONAL DESIRE TO MAINTAIN BEST POSSIBLE LIAISON BETWEEN HIS GOVERNMENT AND OURS. HE STATED THAT HE HAD FELT A SLIGHT "COLDNESS" IN THE PAST BUT THAT HIS HAD BEEN OVERCOME WELL BEFORE AMBASSADOR CATTO'S DEPARTURE.

7. IN ANSWER TO SPECIFIC POINTS ABOVE, WE MADE FOLLOWING REPLIES:

(A) WITH RESPECT TO HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR PROBLEM WE EMPHASIZED OUR BELIEF THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS AN AGREEMENT FREELY ARRIVED AT BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES; THAT NO SOLUTION IMPOSED ON EITHER OR BOTH OF THE PARTIES WOULD BE WORKABLE. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WE ENJOYED WARM RELATIONS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES AND DID NOT WISH TO TAKE SIDES BETWEEN THEM. WE EXPRESSED OUR WILLINGNESS AND INDEED DESIRE TO BEIKF ASSISTANCE IN WORKING OUT A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS EXPRESSED ABOVE, AND POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD SERVED INFORMALLY AS A CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO, PARTICULARLY IN DISCOUNTING RUMORS, AND WERE WILLING TO CONTINUE TO DO SO. MOLINA ACCEPTED THIS. WE EXPRESSED OUR OPINION THAT BOTH SIDES WERE NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH BUT THAT NEITHER SIDE BELIEVED THE OTHER WAS; WE ADDED THAT HIS SEEMED TO BE CLOUDING THE MEXICAN TALKS AND INTERFERING WITH THE DIALOGUE THAT SHOULD BE TAKING PLACE. WE STATED THAT WE WERE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT CONTACTS WERE CONTINUING ON THE BORDER AND AT A HIGH LEVEL BETWEEN MOLINA AND LOPEZ. FINALLY WE URGED THAT ANY DECISION ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE MEXICAN NEGOTIATIONS CONSIDER THE OVER-RIDING IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AN AIR OF CALM AND CONTINUITY AND NOT GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF A BREAK-DOWN IN THE TALKS OR A STALEMATE IN NEGOTIATIONS. LEAVING TVI MEETING WE ASKED BORGONOVO WHETHER ANY DECISION HAD BEEN MADE ON THE ISSUANCE OF A PRESS STATEMENT FROM MEXICO. HE SAID THIS MATTER PROBABLY WOULD BE DISCUSSED TODAY.

(B) WITH RESPECT TO COMBAT AIRCRAFT, WE REITERATED OUR POLICY OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS. WE STATED WE COULD NOT UNILATERALLY ASSURE A BALANCE OF FORCES IN CENTRAL AMERICA; THAT EACH COUNTRY HAD A RIGHT TO DETERMINE ITS OWN NEEDS AND BUY WHEREVER IT CHOSE. HOWEVER WE INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO MAKE PARALLEL, SCRUPULOUSLY EQUAL OFFERS TO BOTH

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HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR AND KEEP EACH SIDE ADVISED OF WHAT WE WERE OFFERING THE OTHER. WE STATED WE HAD NOT OFFERED ANY ADDITIONAL A-37'S TO HONDURAS.

(C) WE EXPRESSED OUR STRONG DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH EL SALVADOR'S DEVELOPMENT PLANS BOTH DIRECTLY THROUGH AID AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH BID AND IBRD.

(D) WE URGED MOLINA TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE EMBASSY PARTICULARLY IN HEADING OFF ANY PROBLEMS THAT MIGHT ARISE. HE RECIPROCATED THE OFFER AND SAID HE WAS ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO US.

8. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS CORDIAL ALTHOUGH MOLINA PROBABLY WAS DISAPPOINTED. WE SUSPECT HE WAS HOPING FOR A MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST, THROUGH ORTIZ MANCIA,

FOR US PRESSURE ON HONDURAS.

WE BELIEVE THAT ANY USE BY HONDURAS AS A PRESSURE
POINT OF MOLINA'S STRONGLY FELT NEED FOR A DELAY UNTIL
AFTER ELECTIONS WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, PERHAPS STRONGLY
SO. ON THE OTHER HAND LOPEZ COULD MAKE VERY GOOD USE
OF THIS BY ACCEDING TO MOLINA'S WISHES, PERHAPS AT THE NEXT CHIEFS
OF STATE MEETING, AS A TOKEN OF GOOD FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING
OF MOLINA'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS. THIS WOULD HELP TO IMPROVE THE
NEGOTIATING CLIMATE WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE DETERIORATED
IF DEPT AND EMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA AGREE THIS COULD BE
PASSED TO SOMOZA, WITH REQUEST THAT HE PASS THE SUGGESTION
ON TO LOPEZ THOUGH NOT, OF COURSE, MENTIONING
THAT IT COMES FROM US. THE FORM OF ANY POSTPONEMENT OBVIOUSLY
ALSO WOULD BE IMPORTANT AND SHOULD BE GEARED TO AVOID THE
APPEARANCE OF A BREAK-DOWN OR STALEMENT.
MOSKOWITZ

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